(c) and (d) The State Government of Kerala has proposed technology mission for black pepper for implementation as a state activity. The mission envisages to pool available resources and efforts and integrate the activities of all State and Central institutions/agencies located in the state and involved in development of this crop to work towards objective of improving production and productivity of black pepper.

(e) Does not arise.

Approval for Utilising the Grant for Consumer Courts

2216. SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL : Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have received a proposal from the Government of Maharashtra, seeking approval for utilising the financial grants given for strengthening the consumer courts for the years 1995 and 1996, aggregating to Rs. 173.80, during the financial year 1997-98;

(b) if so, whether the Government have taken any decision in the matter ; and

(c) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Central Government has already accorded permission to the Government of Maharashtra to utilise the grant sanctioned in 1995-97 for strengthening the infrastructure of Consumer Courts during the year 1997-98.

Curtailing the Production of Penicillin-G

2217. SHRI NARAYAN ATHAWALAY : Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Bulk Drug Manufacturers Association have represented to the Government for devising a mechanism to curtail the production of domestic Pen.G manufacturers to help in stabilising the price of the bulk drug which has slumped in the recent times due to a large gaps in demand and supply;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken/ proposed to be taken thereon; and

(c) the details of fresh policy initiatives taken by the Government in regard to production of Pen. G and other bulk drugs during the last 16 months upto 31.7.1997?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A representation has been received from the Bulk Drug Manufacturers Association in which they have suggested that all the five major manufacturers of Pen.G namely, SPIC, TGBL, JKPL, HMGB and Alembic should be advised to voluntarily restrict their production to the level of 75% of what they are producing today. However, the Govt. has no power under any rule to enforce reduction in the production of Pen.G.

(c) Steps taken to encourage production of Bulk Drugs form a part of the modification in Drug Policy, 1986, which came into effect from September, 1994, inter-alia, are :

(i) Industrial Licensing has been done away with except in a few cases.

(ii) Reduction in Customs Duty on raw material/ Intermediates.

(iii) Liberalisation in foreign investment.

(iv) Simplification of pricing system.

Joint Meeting on Agricultural Research

2218. SHRI NAMDEO DIWATHE : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether any joint meeting has been held between Indian agricultural scientists/experts with developed/ developing countries for mutual understanding, strengthening bilateral cooperation and indentify areas for joint agricultural research during the last one year and till July 31, 1997;

(b) if so, the details of issues discussed and outcome thereof ; country-wise ; and

(c) the action taken by the Government in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI) : (a) ICAR held a joint workshop with Overseas Development Administration (ODA) UK on 5th-6th February, 1997 and Indo-ACIAR (Australian Centre for Inter-national Agricultural Research) Consultation on 10-11 July, 1997 for cooperation in the field of agricultural research.

(b) The issues discussed in the ICAR-ODA Joint Workshop included : natural resources system, plant science programme, crop protection, biotechnology, post-harvest technology, farm implement, animal health, livestock production, fishery sciences, dryland agriculture and watershed management, peri-urban interface, water quality and agro-forestry system. In the Indo-ACIAR Consultation the issues discussed were ; Overview of Indo-ACIAR program, Perspective on future National Research Priorities, Opportunities for Australia's Assistance, Priorities for future ACIAR-India collaboration in agricultural research. The priorities areas have been identified for collaboration with ODA and ACIAR in the fields of crop improvement, post-harvest technology, animal sciences, natural resources management, forestry, fisheries, agriculture natural resources economics and system capacity building.